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177 178 184 796 621 The former, who had no land in his native village, frequently told me that for him Daredih was his village; the latter, by virtue of his position, of which he is extremely proud, is required to attend rites, and no doubt his status makes the *bustee* and its deities more his own than would otherwise be the case. The others, who have neither agricultural land nor position in Daredih, feel that it is not their village, that the local gods are not quite their gods, that the priest is not quite their priest, and that the founder of the village is not the founder of their village. This lack of commitment is reflected in both the attenuation of and non-participation in the various ceremonies of *Baha*. The Santal themselves say, "Here all are workers so we don't worship so much," or simply, "Here we don't worship so much."

[769] This interpretation rather than secularization is supported by the observation that ancestor worship is generally practiced even by those who do not attend the community rites performed by the priest; in ancestor worship it is, of course, one's own ancestors who receive the offering. The failure to dance before the priest's house and the failure to provide him with a dancing procession to and from the Sacred Grove are indications that he is not quite their priest; the same explanation accounts for their frequent failure to contribute to the sacrifices on behalf of the *bustee*. Indeed, the Santal themselves regard all of these acts as signs of respect to the village leaders, and as already indicated, the priest often complains on this score.

Nor can all these acts, which both express and serve to weaken the solidarity of Daredih, be entirely due to the time [793] demands of industrial employment. The priest is himself an industrial worker, as are many of his patrilineal relatives who live in Daredih, and they are regular participants. Also, the

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369 There are a few observations concerning ceremonial practice
796 which apply to all the city Santal (excluding, of course, those
[822] who live in town *bustees*). We have seen that the city Santal
778 are not even a community to the degree that the *bustee* Santal
[793] are; they do not, for the most part, live side-by-side, they have no headman or priest and they have no Sacred Grove in which to assemble for community worship. The practice of community worship is ruled out for lack of physical facilities, but as we have seen from our examination of the *bustee*, there is little reason to think that their presence would be sufficient to maintain ceremonial practice and participation at the level obtained in rural villages.

342 What is most striking about the city Santal is that they do
369 not practice ancestor worship in their Company houses. Their
769 explanation of this, with a little elaboration, appears to me to be an adequate one. They say, "Who knows whose houses these were before we got here—they are not our houses. That
[192] is why we do not worship here." It will be recalled that ancestor worship is performed behind a wall dividing off a portion of the main room of the house and known as "inside" (*bhitar*; Santali and Hindi = "inside"). The same word is used to refer to secret rites and deities of a family and of a local lineage, i.e., when a question touches on such things they will say you are asking an "inside" question. It will also be recalled that this "inside" portion of the house must be guarded against pollution by menstruating women. Since it is not permissible to erect such a wall within a company house, again physical facilities in the city render traditional practice difficult. But more than the particular difficulty of lack of a wall, there is a
[783] general question of pollution. Not only does the company house not provide a proper sanctuary for the "inside" rites of

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881 [776] [273] [302] them all at the same time. If a child should die before having been through this ceremony, they do not cremate such ones and do not carry their bones to the Damuda river.

A man wants to have the caco chaṭiar for his children; he brews beer and procures oil and turmeric to anoint the village people. Then he calls the village headman and his deputy and pours beer out to these two. They ask him: Look here, you, what beer is this that you are giving us? He says: This, father, is intimation-beer; I am minded to do so and so, that is to say, I am going to have caco chaṭiar for my children. This happens in the morning. After having drunk the beer the village headman and his deputy send the Goḍet to call the village people[7]. They come; when they are assembled, the village girls first anoint the village priest and his wife sitting on a mat; thereupon they anoint the field priest and his wife, after them the village headman and his wife, thereupon his deputy and this one's wife, the custos morum and wife, his deputy and wife, the messenger and wife, and finally they anoint all the (men and) women of the village. Now they serve beer round. First they give the village headman and his deputy, thereupon all the people. When one round has been served they ask the father of the children: For how many is this? He answers: For so and so many. Then so many children as are to have the caco chaṭiar, so many rounds of beer they serve, each round four leaf-cups to each. Then they ask the father of the children: How many iṛi and how many erba of yours have shot into ears[8]? He says: So many iṛi and so many erba have shot into ears. They say in reply: Very fortunate. Then they ask him: Whereabouts are the countries? The children's father then names the countries where the grandparents of the children live. Then they call for the namesake-beer. Now the grandparents of the children give the village people beer that they have brought with them from their homes. Thereupon the village people dance singing:

[793]

[603] [539]

Along here, along in this direction are Nilgai tracks,
Along here, along in this direction are Nilgai hind tracks.

Track, track the Nilgai tracks,
Follow, follow the Nilgai hind tracks.

On the tank embankment are Nilgai tracks,
On the river bank are tracks of the Nilgai hind.

Tie on him (her), O mother, a golden bell,
Fasten on him (her) O mother, hollow sounding bells.

[192]

[7] Nowadays the Jog Maṛjhi is generally asked to call the people together; the people sit in rows on straw spread out for the purpose. [8] I. e., how many girls and how many sons have been born to you? iṛi is Paskrom Cren-gulli, L., fig. used about a girl; erba is Sakrie Hatha, Kenth., fig. used about a boy.

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calls the young men in the village together, sending the Godet, and says to them: Do 585
set up a marriage-shed for us here. Thereupon he brings the village priest. When he 793 •
has come, the village headman says to the bridegroom's father: Please give the priest 782
three fowls, one speckled and two white ones, three half-seers of rice, one pot of beer, and the necessaries for making a sacrifice. The priest takes all this to the sacred grove or somewhere in the open field and sacrifices the fowls in the name of the marriage-shed. He makes the following invocation: Here then, Jaher era, in connexion with so and so setting up a marriage-shed I am giving thee, handing thee a sacrificial fowl; mayest thou with pleasure, with favour, accept this, receive this; mayest thou curse this, doom this big; we are now going to such and such a village to be a bridegroom's party; on the road, in the forest may no sudden fear or alarm happen to us, no stumbling, no fall, no spells, no enchantments; to the right, to the left may you toss it away, spatter it away, Father my Ṭhakur. We shall eat, we shall drink, do not let stomach-ache, headache arise, be caused. With the friends may there be no strife, no quarrel, no evil, no enmity, no loss, no destruction, Father my Ṭhakur. While reciting this invocation he offers the speckled fowl to Jaher era. Thereupon he sacrifices one white fowl to The Five (Mǫṛǫko Turuiko)[22], making a similar invocation. Lastly he sacrifices the remaining white fowl to Marañ buru, and to him also he recites an invocation in the same way. The village priest has brought a couple of men with him; they make a hash of the fowls and eat them, and the pot of beer they brought they also drink; thereupon they return home. 585

The Jǫg Mañjhi then again goes to the marriage-shed and asks the young men: Have [824]
you finished the marriage-shed or not as yet? They answer him: Yes, we have finished it. The Jǫg Mañjhi then says to them: Dig a hole in the middle of the marriage-shed; we shall put a Mahua tree down there. He next asks them: Have you finished digging the hole or not as yet? He says to them: Enlarge the hole down below in the ground. When they have done this, the Jǫg Mañjhi says to the bridegroom's parents: Bring three branches of raw turmeric and five cowries and three tips of dhubi grass. Grind the turmeric, mix three grains of sun-dried rice into the turmeric. They collect this and cover it up in a bundle, and where they have enlarged the hole, there they put it down. When this is done, they plant the Mahua tree in the dug hole, and when they have planted the Mahua tree they wrap a straw-rope round it up to the top.

Thereupon the Jǫg Mañjhi calls the woman, the conductor of ceremonies, and says to [343]
her: Plaster this with earth and make it smooth, and whitewash it with flour, and grind some red-ochre stone; when this is done, paint figures on the marriage-shed post, and paint pictures of the bride and bridegroom in front. The conductor of ceremonies does this.

Thereupon the Jǫg Mañjhi says to the young men who set up the marriage-shed: This [515]
is finished; now before anything else have some food and strengthen yourselves. He goes

[22] See Santal Dictionary s. v.

[6] Cute Ms. Mus. – Bodding.

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The Jǫg Mạńjhi is the one in charge of the young men and girls. He has to see to it that no shamelessness shall occur in the village. If anything of this kind occurs and he does not find it out, the village people will tie him with a piece of wood and a halter to a post in the headman's cattle-shed and thrash him, and they will also fine him.

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But if the Jǫg Mạńjhi finds out the misbehaviour of any young man and girl, he will seize the young man and give him into the charge of the village council. If the young man agrees in a council meeting to keep the girl as his wife, they will only fine the father of the young man; but if the young man does not assent to marry, the Jǫg Mạńjhi will thrash him in the presence of the village council, so that his skin is torn, and they will fine his father heavily. Some people become utter paupers by again and again paying fines for a son.

During the Sohrae all the young men and girls stay for five days in the house of the Jǫg Mạńjhi, and eat and drink with him, and they also sleep in his house. And if anything should happen, he will have the responsibility.

624

At the namegiving and social initiating ceremonies and in everything in connexion with marriages the Jǫg Mạńjhi is to the front. And in connexion with the attendance at the worship of the spirits and at religious festivals he is the leader. The Jǫg Mạńjhi gets more beer to drink than all others of the village people.

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Formerly the Jǫg Mạńjhis were keeping the young men and girls of the village in very strict order; but nowadays they are very careless. The village girls give them much beer to drink; in this way they treat them with their medicine in order that even if the Jǫg Mạńjhi gets to know something about them he may not reveal it, or, in case they should go astray anyhow, there may not be inflicted too heavy a punishment. The young men also will treat the Jǫg Mạńjhi, when they get an opportunity; and they will also tell him their respective sins. At such a time the Jǫg Mạńjhi will say to them: Walk sensibly here with us; you will have to support them; otherwise I shall flog you white.

The Jǫg Paranik is the assistant of the Jǫg Mạńjhi, and when there is no Jǫg Mạńjhi there, he will do the Jǫg Mạńjhi's work.

624

The Goḍet, by the headman's order, calls the village people together to council meetings. When the spirits are worshipped, he collects the fowls for sacrifice in the village, and if any bundles or the like come to be forwarded, he carries them to the next village. They call the Goḍet the Big Mạńjhi, because his word is more prevalent in the village, he is like the police. The ancestors have said, it is told, that Marań buru was the Goḍet of Ṭhạkur. The Goḍets are very impetous; they are also very greedy. In many places they have robbed the Mạńjhi of his position; they have also become Parganas even. If they become Mạńjhi or Pargana, they will not judge righteously; they act covetously. If the Paranik of a village becomes Mạńjhi, the Goḍet by right becomes Paranik.

793

The Naeke (the village priest) sacrifices to the village bongas, this is his only work.

782 The Kuḍam Naeke (the priest of the outskirts) offers his own blood every time the Naeke performs sacrifices, in the name of the Pargana bonga and the bongas along the
• 793 boundaries. At Janthaṛ (the first fruit offering of the heavy rice) he every year sacrifices a pig to the Pargana bonga, and at that time he also offers his own blood to him and to the bongas along the boundaries. At the hunt he offers to the same, in order that the village people may be fortunate and return well. At this time he makes an invocation: Greetings then, O Pargana, blood offering, pricked out blood is given, is offered to thee for the sake of the hunt, where on the right side or the left side a servant girl or a dog puppy, a lọṭọ thorn (a thorny bush), a kaṛke thorn (a pricking bush)[8] may be, in holes and recesses, mayest thou press it down, cover it up. A worn-out winnowing-fan, a ball of cotton thou wilt arrange for us, make security for us, Father my Ṭhakur, Lord.

e. The division of agricultural land.

621 When they have appointed the rulers of a new village, then they sit one day and divide the land and homestead fields. They make units. One unit of agricultural land is what
423 is needed for one plough. Having settled this they fix the rent, and at the same time set aside the land allotted to the offices of Mạṅjhi, Paranik, Jọg Mạṅjhi, Jọg Paranik, Goḍet, Naeke, and Kuḍam Naeke. The Mạṅjhi gets four portions, the Paranik gets three portions, the Jọg Mạṅjhi gets two portions, and the others one portion each as office-land. This they have the use of without paying rent. The Mạṅjhi had formerly half a rẹk (unit) following his office. Nowadays some village headmen have very large incomes.

245 In a new village people plant Horse-radish trees and Pipol trees near their respective houses. They eat the Horse-radish tree vegetables and the Pipol tree they have to get shade, and the Pipol tree, it is said, will be of use also in the next world.

When other people see that they get very good crops in a new village, they also will
621 come and settle down there. The old residents will give them a share, a little of their prepared ricefields and of their highland fields, and the headman will show them fallow land to prepare ricefields. Then the village becomes populous. They work, do their business, they eat and drink, they have dances and games, they enjoy themselves, they live there.

f. Wealthy and poor people.

556 In the same village it does not go equally well for all there. Some people have both plough-cattle and servants; they are both industrious and also have sense, and they are also very niggardly; such people become wealthy. But some people have, to start with, no plough-cattle; they are also alone; they also suffer a good deal from fever; they have no sense; they are foolish, they are also lazy, they have no children either, and their women-folk waste away all, or they themselves squander all by beer-drinking, or

[8] The lọṭọ, Randia dumetorum, Lam., and the kaṛke, Briedelia retusa, Sprengel.

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f. Hunting.

224 The great joy of us men is the hunt. From olden times we have continually been hunting, and in however great a danger we may fall, still we do not give up hunting. And if a person will not go, we despise such people and call them women. Our ancestors have fought tigers and bears with great courage; sometimes the tigers and bears have gained the upper hand, and sometimes the men, and so it is going on until the present day.

178 203 224 793 796 In former times they used to announce the hunt by sending a branch from village to village, by stages; but since our stay in Sikhar we notify the day at the Pata (the hook-swinging festival)[6]. As there is a village priest and a priest of the outskirts in the village, there is similarly a dihri (hunt-priest) for the hunt. There is one hunt-priest for every single country. He carries the branch round at the Pata; the people of the country then ask him: In connexion with what is your branch, Sir? He then tells them the name of the forest: In such and such a forest, on such and such a day, at such and such a place we shall meet. He also tells them where they will spend the night. When we come home, we men in the village tell each other the news, saying: At such and such a date they are

224 to hunt through such and such a forest or over such and such a hill. The men of the village then get their different hunting implements together, they string their bows, fix the iron arrow-heads and the blunt arrow-heads in the arrows, they grind the iron arrow-heads and make them sharp-pointed, they grind their battle-axes sharp and give them a handle; they put the spear-heads on the shafts, and the swords they polish bright. They tell the women to prepare dough-balls of Mahua for food, and they make them pound rice to have to take along with them. The village headman has to give five half-seers of rice and one small bundle of Mahua as hunt-bounty. This the hunting men eat, or if some

[782] poor men have nothing, they let them have a sufficiency of this. The village priest sacrifices five fowls for the sake of the hunt.

[534] When the fixed day is reached, a couple of men go at cock-crow in advance out to an open plain to bring the whole male village population together there; they also take kettle-drums and flutes and horns along with them; and until the village men have all come out, they beat the kettle-drums rat-a-tat, blow the flute harmoniously, and blow the horns tootingly, and they sing any amount of forest songs sweetly. When they have all assembled, they shout with one voice together; thereupon they go to the place where they are to meet. Here they eat their noon meal. One after the other the people of the country come and assemble there; the hunt-priest has been there from cock-crow.

224 787 Until the people of the country arrive, the hunt-priest makes a divination about good or bad happenings. If he gets anything bad in any direction, he calls the country people

[6] The Pata should be held on the last day of Cet, about the 15th of April; among the people living in the Santal Parganas it may be held any day during Baisak (middle of April to middle of May). The dihri has a dal-branch with as many leaves as there are days remaining before the hunt is to take place.

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brothers and intimate friends will, risking their life, try to rescue each other; they will either rescue the man, or they will all let themselves be eaten. Nowadays people have become very cowardly; as soon as they hear the word "a tiger, a tiger", they run away, with their loin-strip hanging down in their hand. 224

When it becomes evening, they come out from the forest and go to the place where they are to spend the night. When they have come together, the men of every individual village collect in one place the Mahua-dough or the flour, and sharing this among themselves they eat. We have a story about this. Formerly once, it is told, a poor man had brought with him some fig-dough, because he had no food. At the place where they spent the night, the people of his village, seeing this, did not mix what he had in with theirs; they said: What have you brought? eat what you have yourself, as best you can. And so, poor fellow, he stayed on there eating just this. Next day he shot a Nilgae. Then instead of shouting the name of his village, he shouted "Fig". The men of his village came near and said: It is our deer, fellows! So and so has killed it. The people of the country-side asked this poor man: Why did you shout in such a way? He then told his grief before the country people, saying: When yesterday evening the dough was divided they kept me outside. When they heard this, the country people scolded them a good deal, and the men of the village became humble. They fined them severely through the people of the country-side. From that time up to the present day we do not act in such a way. 224 262

When they have eaten the dough, they commence to prepare rice and curry. The camp fires look like a burning forest, such hosts have assembled. They who cook the rice do this, and some men singe the hares and peafowls; the stomachs and legs they make into curry. Felled deer remain as they are. When they have had their evening meal, the hunt-priest calls out that they are to have their council meeting. Thereupon five or six men from every village go to the meeting, and others blow the flute and sing forest songs; they are highly lascivious; some lie down to sleep. The young men from the village of the hunt-priest wander from camp to camp, singing and begging (as at the Dasãe festival), and the men of the camp each give them a handful of rice, and they on their side make all kinds of fun, and make people laugh. 224 793

The hunt-priest is the headman of the hunt-council, and the people of the country-side are his tenants. Where he sits down to have the council, there the hosts gather, and sitting round there they keep him in the middle, as when there is a halo round the sun. Leading men sit down near him. The hunt-priest now asks the people of the country-side: Do, Sirs, men of the land, if any of you has any distress or grief or any unsettled quarrel, let us hear. Are we all well or not? The men of the land then answer him: So far as mind and body are concerned, we are well by your blessing. The hunt-priest then answers: By the blessing of Thakur we shall get what is good.

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Now, one by one, they tell their grievances before the hunt-priest. One man says: With such and such, and such and such villages we have got into a dispute over a hare. The hunt-priest then asks them: In what way? The man then says: I threw it down with a stick. Another man says: My dog caught it. The hunt-priest then asks both of them: Have you any witnesses? They both answer him: We have, men from such and such, and such and such villages. The hunt-priest then sends for the witnesses; when they come, he questions them, one after the other, on both sides. He who is proved to be the first, he will get it. The men of the land assist the hunt-priest in judging; but the hunt-priest gives the order. If the two have no witnesses, or if, because of cupidity, the witnesses muddle the matter, the hunt-priest will next morning, when the sun is rising, plant an arrow, belonging to each of the two litigants, in the ground. He applies sindur to both arrows, and having a loṭa with water in his hand he stands and says: O Father Ṭhaḳur of heaven, by thy grace we judged, the two did not obey; thou art there, filling the heaven, o Ṭhaḳur Father, and we also, as is seen, sitting here filling the earth, we have judged; as this judgement did not stand, we so many men of the land, are not to be blamed, now then, thou knowest the matter of these two, judge thou between them! The hunt-priest and the men of the country then say to the two litigants: Do bow to the Day-spirit and take up these arrows of yours, we, so many men, are free from responsibility. Do, each of you, take yours, do not fear us, fear Ṭhaḳur. They thereupon make the one who takes up his arrow say: Have a care then, O Ṭhaḳur, if I am acting unrighteously, may a tiger eat me in this forest of the hunt, and if I am not acting unrighteously, I shall return home safe and sound. If the other man also has the courage, he will do the same, otherwise he will withdraw. The hunt-priest then at once pours the water in the loṭa out where the arrow had been put in the ground. When he has done this, he bows to it and says: Do, O Ṭhaḳur, judge thou between them, what is good or bad. Thereupon during the hunt that day they make them, if they have both sworn, both stay together, and in the middle of the forest a tiger will come out roaring, and he will come running straight for these two, and he will first stand with his forelegs on the man who has spoken the truth, but will not do him any harm; thereupon he will leave him and make an utter end of the unrighteous one. This we have many of us seen with our own eyes. If he is saved from a tiger, he will surely die by some other calamity.

At the night-council of the hunt the hunt-priest and the men of the country together dispose of disputes in connexion with killed animals, one after the other, if there are witnesses; and if not, they next morning make the disputing men swear, just as I have told. When they have settled the disputes in connexion with killed animals, the hunt-priest says: Well, Sirs, men of the country, if you have any other disputes, tell it. Then everybody, one after the other, tell their grievances. One man says: As for me, the village headman and council have without any cause fined me; or: The Pargana and the headmen of five

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villages have passed an unrighteous judgement in connexion with some riceland, or in connexion with a bride and bridegroom; or: Me they have without any cause called a witch[8]; or: I have on account of this or that in the meantime forbidden so and so people to fetch water and touch the drinking vessels; or:: As for me, the village people have without any cause or reason shut my door, — they make a thousand complaints, because the hunt-council is our High Court. There the Pargana, Deś Mañjhi, and village headmen have no power to intimidate any one, the men of the country, small and big, judge, and there they utterly subdue the greedy, fat people, if they have in any case acted unjustly. Some greedy people do not go there at all out of shame or fear. If they have not gone there, the men of the country will next day seize them, and if they do not obey, the men of the country will next day go in crowds to their home, and if they find proofs of their injustice, they punish them so as to make them flinch. At the hunt judging they judge very righteously; they do not let any injustice pass at all. In the village the headman or the Pargana scold and intimidate us, as they take us to be of no account; but at the burnt forest they have no power to silence us; then they become slinking like the tail of a cowardly dog; for this reason we poor people have great trust in the judgement of the burnt forest[9].

Continuing to judge, dancing the duñger, singing forest songs, and blowing the flute they continue until dawn. They then prepare their morning meal and eat; thereupon the hunt-priest sacrifices the remaining fowls. Now they enter the other forest and turn back hunting. When, at noon or in the middle of the afternoon, they have finished hunting they disperse. Thereupon they start for their various villages, hunting as they pass along.

Formerly they were hunting up to five days, being continually out so long; but nowadays, what can be done, when there is no such big forest? Formerly when the hunters entered and passed through the street of any village, the girls of the village washed their feet, and the hunters gave these girls campa flowers[10], and they saluted each other. Thereupon the village people gave the hunters Mahua dough and water to eat and drink. Nowadays this custom of ours has been discontinued.

When the hunters come home, the respective household people wash their feet, and they salute each other, because they have come back saved from death; as they say among us: The danger for women is at childbirth; the danger for men is during hunt and chase; if you get through this, you will see ages. When they have washed their feet, they give them food. They eat; thereupon the hunters go to where there is water; here they gather, and when they have come together, they singe and cut up the killed animals. The one

[8] I. e., his wife or a daughter or a related woman living in his house; a man is not a witch. [9] The hunt-council is constantly referred to as "the burnt forest". Every year the Santals in the beginning of April set fire to the undergrowth and especially all the dead leaves lying on the ground. [10] Either a small bush, Ochna squarrosa, Roxb., or a large tree, Michelia champaca, L.

224 who shot the deer, him they give the hind half; and of the head they give him one split
piece, of the spleen one split piece and of the liver one split piece. To the village priest
[793] they give the flesh on both sides of the backbone and a part of the liver, to offer to the
[622] spirits. For the village headman they take out one thigh as his part of the rump belonging to the killer, the village headman gets the upper part of this; what is below this his deputy gets, and the end of the leg the Godet gets. And the kettle-drum drummer gets for himself a separate part of this. The remaining flesh the hunters divide equally among themselves, and for the men who did not go to hunt, they leave a little flesh, and this they apportion to them, house by house; this portion they call an extra share (capo joro). Of hares and peafowls the village priest has no right to get anything, neither has
[793] the village headman any right, nor have they any right to get an extra portion; of these
[622] only the one who shot gets his share, and the remaining flesh the hunters divide in equal portions among themselves. They who carry get the belly, of deer and of hares. This they call the belly for carrying. Of all kinds of birds the carriers get the gizzard.

The village priest wraps the flesh he is to offer up in a dry leaf and roasts it and offers it to The Five the Six, Pargana haram, Mañjhi haram, and Marak buru; having offered it he eats the flesh.

The village headman has, by customary law, to give five half-seers of rice as a hunt bounty; this the hunters cook together with the flesh of the heads into a hash and eat. Thereupon they come to their respective homes with their portions. The shooter's rightful portion and the village headman's portion they carry along; the headman's portion they bring into his house, and the rightful portion of the killer of an animal into his house. They who carry and bring this, get beer and food at both places. In the house of the shooter they separate from his rightful portion the pot-flesh on the underside of the knee. This the sisters and daughters of the shooter get. However far away they may live, the shooter brings this to them and leaves it there, and these treat him to beer and food, and they look upon this as a great honour. His part of the head and the liver the shooter
[769] cooks with rice into a hash and offers this to the ancestors of his family.

g. Composing songs and the like.

538 Parables they have gradually composed, at different occasions. Taking up what has been seen they have composed these. If a person suddenly speaks and reveals this or that, then others, thinking that this is good and fitting, will also speak the same, and thus it is spread about. Folk-tales and fairy-stories are not composed nowadays, only old ones are in vogue, learnt one after the other. Riddles we have also only old ones. To mimic no
536 one is able to learn, only by having a natural ability people are able to mimic, to show the faults of people. The songs are mostly old ones; still they are now and then com-
533 posing a few new ones. Men have composed riñja, matwar, and marriage songs, and

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Nij-Hansdak's along with a Tikà Murmu, (the Santal equivalent for a Brahmin for such purposes), for ceremonial expiation of the erring soul. It is on payment of Rs. 1-4as., a cup of bell-metal and a napkin (to be received by the Tikà Murmu) that he can be restored to his clan. 614 688 627

Fourthly, we should note that Santals, although divided into so many clans and sub-clans, do not observe any caste-system as the Hindus. Although the *Murmus* are called *Thàkurs* and are generally selected as priests of the tribe (in preference to others), they dine with any one within the tribal fold and marry anywhere within the permitted grades. But it is not the custom of the Santal to take rice or water from the *Dekos* (non-Santals). Although in course of time, some clans claim some superiority over others, no rigours of castes are noticeable. But as we have observed before, the same does not hold good with regard to non-Santals. Santal boys and girls, after their marriage, are prohibited by strict regulation from dining with the Dekos excepting the Kurmbis, Hos and Bhumij. Thus they maintain, by means of a rigorous taboo, their purity from defilement. 614 564 [793] [784]

In conclusion, we should note that we questioned the Santals of the Santal Paraganas regarding marriage within the clan (viz. including all the various sub-clans). The educated Santals said that 614

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wit and sometimes his force, to control the tipsy folk. 624

(iv) *Godet*:—He is a sort of an usher and bearer-in-general at the beck and call of the headman and his assistants, holding like them rent-free lands as the privilege of his office. [423]

(v) *Naeke* and *Cudam Naeke*:—Added to the fore-going, the ecclesiastical functions of the tribe are exercised by the *Naeke* (village-priest) and his assistant, whose special function is to propitiate the hill-spirits. 793 [782]

(2) Inter-village organization:— 634

The rural units, on their turn, are federated into a number of larger groups, each under the supervision (as we saw in Mayurbhanj) of a Desh-Pròdhan, whose special function, we shall soon notice.

On the top of this, these federal units are co-ordinated under the superintendence of a Santal over-chief, called *Pargana* having a varying area of the country under his jurisdiction, over which according to immemorial custom, he is the supreme head.

The special function of these tribal offices will be explained in detail in course of this chapter; and it is time that we should deal with the village assembly, a wonderful relic of ancient India embedded in the Santal tribal jurisprudence, serving 121 623

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684 All this time a tribal feast is in preparation at the cost of the offender at his house. The tribe assembles there. The outcaste washes the feet of the village elders, and thereafter serves the food personally to the tribe assembled. After the feast, the "Mòṇṛèn hòṛ" (the village elders) address the couple saying, "Henceforth you are parted. But should you unite again, you will be fined Rs. 25 each and driven out of the country." They then dig a hole and bury cowdung there or they may simply deposit some cow-dung on the place of the feast. In conclusion, the village-priest offers three fowls to the gods *Jahèr era*, "Mòntènko" and *Maraṅ Buru* so that they may purify the village from the sin committed by the guilty couple, now formally divorced.

[782] [793] [783]

Conclusion

181 619 783 784

The tribal psychology behind these proceedings is not very difficult to be understood. The Santals, like other *Muṇḍà* tribes, consider their tribal solidarity and strength to be their first concern. In the preservation of this tribal entity from conscious or unconscious pollution, they are fired by a primitive fanaticism and they take all measures whereby, they think, they can purify the tribe as a whole, as intrigues beyond the permitted degrees and unions with foreigners serve as the medium of supernatural

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into customary laws. The Santal has, in his own way, learned to value the corporate discipline necessary under social life. He has built up his own body of traditions and customs and has appointed proper custodians to look over them, to administer them for the well-being of the tribe on the earth. Nobody expects from the Santal the cultural level we associate with the civilized races in India, but enquirers into their manners and customs must be struck with the correlation of the cultural evolution of the tribe with its material and environmental back-ground, noticed in the previous chapters.

Scholars of Pre-Dravidian life have noticed the communistic aspect of their society. In many instances, this holds true of Santal life. The leadership of the tribe, whether social or socio-religious as exercised by the Headman or the Priest, is exercised with due restraint because of the check imposed by the consultative body known as "Monren hor." Thus Santal tribal judgments have that provision for justice and fair-play which all civilised societies crave. That such democratic ideas permeate the whole tribe will be apparent from the practice of offering gifts to the member in whose house there is festival going on. To a people who are remarkably poor like the Santals, this practice lightens the burden of the house-holder, bound by custom to provide community feasts and drinks, apart from

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881 of the male-child to all the privileges of the
783 community life of the tribe. It is relevant to add
[582] that marriage is not permitted to any one who has
[764] not gone through the ceremony and should one die (without going through the ritual) his dead-body cannot be cremated nor are his bones thrown into the river, the most important step in a Santal funeral. It is, however, frequently seen that the father of several children performs the *Caco-chatiar* ceremony of all of them together.

As an initial step, *Jang hàṇḍia*, is prepared in the early morning. The villagers procure oil and
[622] turmeric. The Headman and *Paranik* drink rice-
[624] beer (*hàṇḍia*) and send for the villagers. The women
[793] then rub oil and turmeric on the bodies of the *Naeke* (village-priest) and their assistants and this is done to all in a customary order of precedence from the village-officials down to the villagers. Rice-beer is served. The Santals dance and sing.

[538] Then comes the turn of an old man of the village, a *Guru*, the repository of Santal lores to recite the tribal story of the creation of the world and the wanderings of the Santal (already narrated in the 1st. Chapter, Santal Genesis and Migration) ancestors till they came to their present habitat.

It is then emphasised that all the impurities of the male-child have been purged away and by participating in the drinking bout of *hàṇḍia*, they

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796 [782] almost identical to the *Erok' Sim*, the June sowing festival.

[114] [184] That this is an essential Santal festival is corroborated both by Risley and Dr. Campbell, but the Mayurbhanj Santals do not seem to observe it any longer.

796 243 782 *Iṛi Gundli Nànwàni* (The Millet Festival—August) This festival is connected with the offering of the first fruits of millet (Iṛi, *Panicum milleceum* ; Gundli, *Panicum frumentaceum*) to the tribal gods of the Santals.

796 793 243 782 The essentials of the festival are that the *Naeke* (priest) after a purificatory ablution goes to the field of a *raiyat* (tenant) where the crop has ripened and harvests as much as he can. Then he goes to the *Jahèrthan*, cleanses it with cow-dung and offers the corn to all the gods of the Holy Grove viz. Jahèr era, Mòṇṛènko, Maraṅ Hòṛ, Gosa*ne* era and Pargana. Next he spills milk and utters the hymn:—

[539] 'We salute you Creator (Bapu Ṭhàkur) and Jahèr era. We offer you the first-fruits of our corn. We shall eat these, but let us have no bowel-complaints or head-ache."

The priest then returns to the village and going to the shrine in the Headman's house offers

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the new corn with a similar prayer. The remainder of the millet, he takes home for himself. 796 793 243 782 [184]

The Millet Festival, called *Muchri*, exists in all its details in Mayurbhanj and is observed by the Santals there.

Gamah Purnima (August)

Side by side with these harvest-festivals, the Santals of Mayurbhanj observe *Gamah Purnima* on the full-moon of *Sravan* (August), when cows are fed with salt, *mohua* flowers, rice, the corrosive *bhela* fruit and a grass called *mutha*, their horns being copiously rubbed with oil. Thereafter, men and women dance round a Karam (*Adina Cordifolia*) branch, planted at the *akhra* (place for dance), a special *Karam* dance, and on the conclusion immerse it in water. Ancestors are also propitiated with offerings of rice-beer. The Santals observe the festival along with some of the Hindus. All wear new clothes and indulge in feasts and drinks, not forgetting to feed Brahmins and Vaishnavas. 796 [535] [769] [171]

Karam Pòròb (September-October)

This is a festival observed in September-October. The males of the village go after nightfall and cut a branch of a *Karam* tree (*Adina Cordifolia*,) which they fix in the village lane (*kulhi*) and round which the young people dance till morning, when the Karam branch is thrown into a tank. 796 [824] [535]

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796 [182] *Karam* branch is thrown into a tank. No sacrifices are offered, but a libation of liquor is poured out to the manes of the village-chief and to *Maraṅ Buru*.[1]

796 184 Although at first sight, it appears similar to the Mayurbhanj *Gamah-Purnima*, it is not so. In Mayurbhanj, the *Karam puja* is performed for the sake of amusement and welfare of the villagers during the *Gamah Purnima* or the *Sohrae*, as we shall see later. The *Karam Pòròb* may not be performed by the Mayurbhanj Santals if they do not like it and no harm to the villagers is thought to result from its non-performance. This is an extra festival in Mayurbhanj. But it should be noted that there are some who worship the *Karam Boṅga* and perform the *pòròb* as a hereditary practice. But although it is in existence in Mayurbhanj, the festival is observed only occasionally.

Ianthar (*November*)

796 [182] [193] On the occasion of the celebration of the *Ianthar* in November, the villagers subscribe towards a hog or a ram in honour of the tribal deity, *Ianthar*; and it is sacrificed before the *Parganathan* (the shrine of the village deity, *Pargana*) by a special priest called *Kuḍàm Naeke*. The special feature of the festival

1. Dr. Campbell, *Santali to English Dictionary*, page 318.

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The special feature of the festival is that articles for worship are supplied by the priest himself, and only the male members of the tribe are allowed to eat the meat of the animals sacrificed. The priest then prays to the god *Ianthar* with the following incantations:—

We salute thee Father Creator *Pargana*.
We offer you all these in the name of *Ianthar*;
We pray that whatever we may eat, we may digest.
Let there be no diseases like headache, diarrhoea and bowel-complaints.
And bless our crop in the field, and grain in the barn.
Protect them from rats and other pestilence.

Ianthar (called by Risley *Ianthar puja*) is in effect the offering of the first fruit of low-land paddy, as *Iri Gundli* is of millets. Another name for the festival is *Baihar Horo* Nanwàni.

In course of our enquiries in Mayurbhanj, many Santals stated that this festival passes under the name of *Maanjanc*[1] there, as was very clear from the fact

1. One wonders if the name is Mak' *Mònjén* in disguise. It is stated by Dr. Campbell to be a festival observed by the Santals after five years or so when the god "Mònjènko" is propitiated with the sacrifice of a white goat. The account in the District Gazeteer of the Santal Parganas considers it "an occasional sacrifice performed as the result of a vow made at a time of great distress", when sacrifices are made to all the national *bongas* in the *Jaherthan*.

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the Hindu festival associated with the worship of the goddess *Kali*. The essential difference between this and the Santal Parganas festival, we have noted in the foregoing pages, is that there is no *Hako katkòm* (catching fish and crabs) and *Jale* (the day of greetings) which concludes the function. Although there is bound to be some overlapping, we propose to deal with this in some detail, so that the reader can have some idea of the special features seen at Mayurbhanj.

On the morning of the first day, called *Um* or *Goṭh Puja*, the *Chatia* (an Oriya word for *Goḍet*) collects subscriptions of fowls and rice from all the villagers and heaps them in the house of the priest. The villagers soon assemble there. All ingredients for the worship, such as cow-dung, sun-dried rice, vermilion, *mithi* (a kind of spice), powdered rice (sun-dried) are placed in a winnowing-fan which the priest carries in his right hand, whereas, in his left he takes a pot of water. He is followed by a villager carrying a pot of rice-beer. With the priest at the head, a silent procession of the village arrives at the *goṭh* (field where the cows graze). Here a spot is selected by the priest and cleaned with cow-dung and water. Next, oblations are offered for the good of the corn, cattle and for the peaceful celebration of *Sohrae*. The Headman, thereafter, addresses the gathering requesting the tribe to be prepared

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796 for a period in which offences are to be connived at, as there is bound to be a good deal of drunkenness.

[782] On the conclusion of the preliminary *puja* at about ten a.m., the rice, fowls and rice-beer already collected, are offered to *Maraṅ Buru* and other deities. [793] Thereafter, these are cooked together by the villagers, while the *Naeke* (priest) prepares a separate dish with the heads of the fowls (because he is a pure and chaste person). Now, offering the dishes again to the gods like *Maraṅ Buru*, the *Naeke* leads the community feast and is followed by the tribe.

796 231 Towards evening, the cattle of the tribe are brought to the *Goṭh* and their horns rubbed with oil. They are then let loose near the spot where the tribe has eaten, and the man whose cow chances to eat the *sal*-leaf plate used by the *Naeke* (priest) is considered to be a very lucky one and endowed with the privilege of supplying a pot of *hàṇḍia* (rice-beer) for the next year's festival. He becomes the hero of the tribe, to be blest with good cattle and harvest, and is raised over the head and shown to the assembly. Eggs are also placed on *sal*-leaves; but cows are not made to walk upon them, as we saw in the Santal Parganas.

796 [533] [831] [786] [685] The nocturnal vigil at Mayurbhanj is practically the same as that during the night of *Gobal Puja*, the same songs are sung, but they add many of an erotic nature. But fruits and vegetables as gourds

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796 will their women wear them in their hair. As distinguished from the *Sobrae*, the Harvest Home, which is a trifle Bacchanalian, this festival is puter in its observances.

796 783 778 The festival begins with a day of purification called *Um*, when the young men of the village assemble at the *Jahèrthan*, (the Holy-Grove) in the village, and build two huts. One of these huts is [776] reserved for the Santal deity, called Gosane era, the other is meant to be jointly shared by Jahèr era, the presiding deity of the grove, "Monrènko", (the "Fives", meaning the five presiding gods) and Maraṅ Buru, the chief presiding deity. The shrines thus built are then purified with cow-dung by the priest. All the young men of the village then bathe and purify themselves.

796 [793] [783] In the meantime, the *Naeke* (priest) cleanses a winnowing fan, a basket, a bow and arrow, a pick-axe, a broom-stick, a holy gong and a hunting-horn and daub them with oil and *mitbi* (a kind of spice).

[624] The evening comes. In the meantime, the *Godet*, the orderly of the village Headman, has presented him (the priest) with three fowls. Three [787] young men now advance towards the priest's house, shaking their heads in a trance and impersonating Jahèr era, Maraṅ Buru and Gosane era respectively. Jahèr era then enters the priest's hut, puts on the bracelet, and putting the basket on his head, takes

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This interesting flower-festival is celebrated in Mayurbhanj under the name of "*Salui puja*", which also means a '*sal*-blossom festival'. But during our investigations, we observed certain differences from the customs of the Santal Parganas, we have noted just now.

In the first place, the *Godet* does not take three fowls to the priest on the evening of the first day at Mayurbhanj, but, we understand, the latter keeps them tied in his own house. Secondly, as regards the actor-deities, the Mayurbhanj Santals impersonate five of them and not three as in the Santal Parganas. The two additional ones are Maraṅ Mañjhi Haṛam and Hudiṅ Mañjhi Haṛam. Thirdly, on the conclusion of the second day, the festival is not carried on to a third. But a general hunt called *Baba Baske Sendra* is arranged, when a leg of the animals hunted, is presented to the Headman, who in turn supplies a pot of *hàndia* (rice-beer) to the hunters. Should no game be shot, the tribe will not rest content, for, they must kill a fowl even by force from the priest's house and make the ceremonial present to the Headman. At night, the tribe assemble near the priest's house, and unloose the string of the bow carried to the Holy Grove. The function concludes with a general drink of rice-beer at the priest's expense.

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776 782 men alone to taste those presented before the Abge Bongas.

793 *Selection of Village Priest*

We consider it appropriate at this stage to give the readers some idea as to how the priest, the human connecting link between the tribe and the 793 gods, is selected. When the priest dies childless or 623 resigns voluntarily, village elders assemble at the 622 house of the Headman or the priest. Next, the six deities of holy grove are invoked by the men sitting on mats, each with a winnowing-fan and some sun-dried rice given by the priest, if he is resigning, or by the Headman, if the priest is dead. [787] As usual some begin to shake their heads in a hypnotic trance and get possessed. These men in trance are asked as to who they are. They name themselves after the gods they stand for. Thereafter, they are questioned as to whom they are recommending for the post. They answer. But it is customary that Maran Buru will first propose a name, and the other actor-deities invariably second and support him.

793 We have said before that the priest gets rent- [423] free lands, out of whose proceeds he can buy [427] sacrificial fowls and other requirements of office. [689] Should he commit any social wrong, he can be [623] removed from office by the tribal assembly.

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that special offerings would be offered when rain falls. And when rains come on, the village-priest propitiates the boundary-deities with the promised rituals and sacrifices.

To Remove Village Illness

When epidemics break out in the tribe, the village deities *Gram pat*, *Bisam Thakurani* (Hindu goddess, *Kali*), together with all the gods of the Holy Grove are invoked by the priest at the head of the tribe. The preliminary procedure of the worship is the same as noted above in connection with removal of droughts with the addition that the witches responsible for the calamity may be mentioned by the men in trance supposed to speak for the deity.

When any member of a Santal household falls ill, the head of the house arranges for an invocation to the *Orak' Boṅga* (household deity). As a preliminary to the worship of the deity, some men fall in a hypnotic stupor, in which they are supposed to have oracular powers. Thereupon, the householder asks the man in trance:—

Dè tabe gosane òkòe boṅga, òkòe buru, heken seteren, jaotya janama lie odong, tabe gosane pataganda sira ganda bil akan ate akan gosane.

Translation:—

"O thou deity! What god art thou? What

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224 was a regular feature in old times but now it is organised more or less for the relaxation of state guests or when a wild animal troubles the people.

Deshua Sendra (Disom Gipitic' Sendra)[1].

[634] The date of this annual hunt is fixed by the Parganas of the hilly areas where the tribal excursion is made in the month of *Chaitra* or *Baisakh* (April—May). The information is sent round by means of 224 202 211 a knotted string called *Girà gaṭh* conveyed by the Santals.

The *modus operandi* of this information may be thus explained. Supposing a string with fifteen knots reaches the village X, the villagers will unloose a knot. When it reaches the village Y, it means that fourteen days remain for the hunt taking place. The messenger carrying the notice is changed there and another takes his place. It is his duty to inform the place of *Gipitic'*, e.g. where the tribe would rest after the hunt.

224 552 782 [634] [793] The preliminaries regarding which portions of the jungle would be beaten by the people of particular *monzas* (areas) being fixed by the Parganas in consultation with the tribe, the *Dihri* of the area offers pujas to the presiding deity of the hill.

[178] [519] [211] 1 This hunt has been stopped since 1916 when a mêlée took place in Mayurbhanj, so the information sent round by a string full of knots cannot now be legally circulated.

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offers pujas to the presiding deity of the hill. 224
Vermilion and red fowls are offered to the gods to- 782
gether with sun-dried rice and incense. As the fowls are sacrificed, the blood is poured on the sun-dried rice and offered to the other gods of the locality in their names. The head of the fowl lies on the 224
ground and the body is kept for the meal of the 782
Dihri. Next the *Dihri* salutes the deity by pro- 793
strating himself fully on the ground and thus invokes him:—

We are hunting in this jungle.
Let the hunting be safe.
Let us hunt in plenty.
Let not lions and tigers kill us.
Let no serpent bite us.

Now the news is conveyed by blowing a horn 224
called *Sakwa* made of the horn of a *Gayal* (a species [534]
of ox, *Bos frontalis*). All men begin beating the [202] [237]
jungle. The hunting goes on as musical instruments like the *Nagera*, *dhak*, *dhor* (small drum), *jharli* (a [534]
bell), cymbal are played upon by a band of musicians. The *Nagera* sounds "dubuṅ, dubuṅ, dubuṅ" but when the animals approach with a swift motion, it is changed to "dhibi, dhibi, dhibi." All men become aware of the advancing games. Starting approximately at 10 A.M., the hunt continues upto sunset, [411]
with bows and arrows, *tangis*, swords, *kapi* and *borolam* as weapons.

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shot. They also take evidence as regards the first, second and third shots.

The rest of the meat is taken by the villagers of the man who had the first shot and shared among themselves. It is worthy of note that even the hunting dogs employed in the chase receive their shares equally with men. Generally, the meat that goes to X's share is carried by his villagers home. The head of the game shot is divided into two parts, the first going to X, the other to the villagers of X. The Headman of X's village gets the left hind leg (*donde*). This is also conveyed home by the villagers, who, in return, receive a pot of rice-beer, twelve seers of rice, five pieces of turmeric and some salt. It is customary for the men thus presented to cook a hotch-poteh with the head of the hunted animal previously received for a common meal.

[231]

In case an animal like a *Gayal* or *Sambar* (a species of deer like an elk) is hunted by, say ten or twelve men, custom lays it down that the first five hunters will only receive their shares.

It should be noted that if X's wife is pregnant, he will not get the head of the animal and it will go to the villagers to be shared by them. The *Dibri* gets a share of meat per each mouza of men who hunted the animals.

[843]
[793].

Another important feature deserves mention. It may be that in a *Deshua Sendra* there may be any

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and night. As a rule they cook their food outside, but always have a fire-place inside. During the cold season they generally cook their food inside, the result being that the house specially at night, is suffocatingly full of smoke and every thing becomes covered with soot. This does not, however, seem to affect the Santals much. In the bed-room they store their rice and all other belongings, and the fowls are kept too in that room at night. It is, of course, not possible to keep such a house clean, even if they tried to do so.

Agriculture :—The Santals before becoming agriculturists were probably in the hunting stage. Still, nothing pleases them so much as to be out for hunting, they even now observe the "Dehiri hunting", which is an annual hunt. During the time of the annual hunt the Dehiri priest performs certain ceremonies to propitiate "Sin Bonga" to avert calamity during hunting. All these suggest that prior to becoming agriculturists the Santals were in the hunting stage. At present the Santals are typical agriculturists. There is no authentic record when the Santal first started tilling the soil. Rev. Bodding in his memoir, "How the Santals live" has mentioned their first attempt at cultivation in the following words :—

"It is just possible that one of their first attempts to get something out of the soil may have been something like what is now called 'kurau', a mode of cultivation that is said to have been used also by Santals in former years, but is not practised by them at the present time, so far as is known. It is, however, still kept up by the Paharias living on the hills of the Santal country. A piece of jungle is cut down high up

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HUNTING

Hunting:—In hunting the Santals are particularly expert. Nothing pleases them so much as to be out after game with bows and arrows. As soon as they come to know that a party is out for hunting they give up their work and join the party. Hunting was one of the earliest methods of the Santals for the search of food. As except the reserved forests, the real forests have mostly disappeared, so game which they get by hunting is extremely poor. Consequently they are now compelled to adopt agriculture as their main source for collecting food. Still they celebrate the annual hunting (Dehri hunting) excursion of a magico-religious nature. The Debri hunting, which is the most important hunting of the Santals, takes place once a year in the month of Falgun (February and March). Dehri, their hunting priest carries a big branch of a Sal-tree (shorea robusta) with leaves and goes to the market, where people seeing him understand the purpose of his coming. As each leaf represents a day so they count them all and go out for hunting just after the number of days as indicated by the leaves of the branch. In this hunting expedition people of distant villages take part. The Dehri is responsible for the hunt, i. e. (all goes well and no mishap occurs). By divination he finds out as to who are threatened by any danger during the hunt, and advises them to turn back but they generally make him sacrifice fowls for them to Sin-Bonga to avert the impending calamity. He performs some ceremony and offers sacrifices to bongas

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[796]

[793] of the forest where the hunt is to be held, to ensure
[782] success and safety. After performance of the ceremony
[411] the whole party enters the forest with bows and
[534] arrows, Pellet bows (Gorkhas), Slings (Gaduar), Tangha (Kopi), battle axes, dogs and Tamuka (drums) and Sakuas (Blowpipe made of buffalo horn) which they beat and blow furiously all through the hunt.

In the forest they stand side by side in a long line surrounding an area. Some remain ready with their weapons behind the big trees, the drums and blowpipes of horn they beat and blow furiously. The men nearest to the game shoot their arrows at them; when the animals being frightened run hither and thither, men shoot arrows, sling stones and tanghas at them. If the game elude the arrows and other weapons shot or hurled at them, the baffled hunts-men shout out and let their dogs run after them. The men, who stand in line, then entangle the game and the hunters who followed the game come up and
[114] kill them. Once when I was at Bokrabandh and Katahaldih I saw the Santal process of catching hares and ichneuman The Santals barricade a meadow, which is just by the side of a forest, with branches of trees and bamboos, only keeping open the side which is towards the forest. They keep an opening on one side where they fix a trap. They drive the hares from the jungle towards the place which is surrounded by the branches. The hares run towards the trap and fall into it. They kill ichneuman in the following way. The inchneuman remains under the ground and some dig holes, while others remain ready with Tanghis. As soon as it comes out they strike or throw Tanghis

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knowledge of herbs as well as the mysterious processes of evil caused by malevolent natural or human agencies and profess to cure the Santal of his daily ailments and afflictions. Thus magic ritualism is the speciality of Santal society and centre of the individual's life, whereas the religious ceremonials are more or less communal group affairs. The complicated cross section of the Santal belief would be well studied in the functional differentiation of the communal priest, the Ato naeke, his assistant, Kudam naeke, and Dehri (hunt-priest), the herbalist medicine-man, the Bonga-doctor or Ojha and the witch-detector on Jan-guru.

Different types of religious functionaires, medicine-man, etc.

Amongst the Santals working in the Daminiko area where they are closely concentrated, it was curious to notice many functionaries named as Ojha, Janguru, Kamruguru, Raranic, Ato-Naike, Kudam Naike and Dehri. The Santal carefully draws a distinction between the officers of his social ceremonials, the high priests of the community and the specialists who may be described in modern terms as the practising physicians and the mental disease experts, the last of course not being psychopathists but masters of spiritualist seances. The sorcerer who practises evil eye and witchcraft is also sharply distinguished.

Studying the other allied tribes nearby we find mostly a distinction between the social functionary in charge of religious festivals sharply distinguished from the spirit-doctor generally possessing second sight. The term for the priest is Naya amongst the Birhors and Pahan amongst the Mundas and Oraons. The word Naya as also Naike may have some connection with the

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Hindi word Nayak or leader, a term often used in the old Hindu army for lieutenants. Rai Bahadur Roy shows the Birhor Naya in a plate as Raja or chief[1]. Similarly, the word Pahan may be equated with the Hindi Pradhan or chief. These indicate the power of the religious functionary in the state. It cannot be said, at least from the study of the Chota-Nagpur tribes as well as those of Assam, that the medicine-man developed into the king, for in both the areas we find the temporal chief superior in authority to the ecclesiatic functionary. But the terms themselves show that the religious functionary is given a considerable recognition in temporal status. It is possible Hindu missionaries in bygone days might have exercised temporal and spiritual authority from which these tribes again recovered, re-establishing their own indigenous superiority of their secular chief or headman.

The term for the spirit-doctor with second sight is Mati among most of the primitive tribes of Chota-Nagpur. The Mundas, the Birhors and the Oraons all call their spirit-doctor Mati, the Hos of Seraikella call him Ojha[2]. The Santal term Ojha has rightly been objected to by Rev. P.O. Bodding as a Hindi loan word derived from Upadhyaya[3]. But we think he goes too far when he says that the whole system of Ojhaism is derived from the Hindus. Similar practices in Hindu society may be sometimes detected in the lowest stratum and also under even the mystic Tantric ritual. They

[1] S.C. Roy's The Birhor, p. 340, Plate XXVIII.
[2] A Chatterjee and T. Das, Hos. of Seraikella, part I p. 28.
[3] Rev. P.O. Bodding, Studies in Santal disease and Connected Folklore, part I.

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171 have been always branded in Hindu scriptures as practices of the lowest order, a sort of getting power over ghosts, pisaches and bhuts. The Gita[1] calls the worshippers of the prets and bhuts as tamasic. Thus they are to be looked upon as survival of a pre-Dravidian
[174] stage of culture in Hindu Society. From the wide-
[192] spread occurrence of the word Mati it would seem that the Santals have lost their own original term and adopted a Hindi loan word as they possibly did in the case of the word for the supreme being, Thakur. The tendency to change the name can be traced amongst the Oraons due to a recent semi-Hindu and semi-aboriginal religious revival movement known as the Bhagat, comparable to the similar Kharwar movement amongst the Santals. The Mati is called Bhagat as the most dignified term for a Baisnab devotee. A change of outlook has also taken place in making the spirits no longer malevolent and the aspect of mercy and grace under Baisnab influence have been emphasised, comparable to the changing of many of the pagan gods of Europe into Roman Catholic patron saints.

224
• 793
171 Hunting being one of the most absorbing occupation of all these tribes a special functionary for hunting occasions is quite natural. Amongst the Santals the Dehri still maintains his own; amongst the Birhors the Diguar or Kotowar has sunk to the position of an assistant to the priest Naya.

[539]

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान् यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान् भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥

[1]Chaptar 17, Verse No. 4.

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778 the last is a Mowah tree; on its foot a stone representing the deity *Gosain Era* is kept. This is the most important one and is known as Lady of the Grove.

296 247 In the Santal villages there is a succession of festivals throughout the year, nearly all connected with agricultural operations. The chief of these is the *Sohrae* or *Banda parab* or the harvest festival, celebrated in the Bengali month Pous (i.e., at the beginning of the month of January) after the rice crop of the year has been harvested. This festival generally lasts for five days. Previously there was no fixed date, villagers of one locality performing this festival one day, others performing on some other day. But now-a-days the [178] [211] Deputy Commissioner of the Santal Parganas fixes the date for this festival, and this date is proclaimed by a man with a *sal* branch in his hand in every *hut*. Before this *parab*, Santal women buy large earthen vessels and replace old ones which they bought in the previous year. When the day has been fixed all houses prepare "handia" (rice beer) and people invite their relatives. [793] [784] [834] [624] The night before the festival commences, the *Naiks* is religiously-abstinent for before any sacrifice the sacrificer must not have relations with a woman and should sleep on the ground on a mat. At day break the *goddet* goes round and collects sacrificial fowls from every house. In the middle of the forenoon the *Naiks* goes near a tank together with some of the [793] [782] village people, the *goddet* taking the fowls with him. The *Naiks* bathes and then sacrifices the fowls to the different *bongas* after which the villagers cook the fowls with rice and eat them, and also drink rice beer. After this the villagers go to *Kulimuchi* (i.e.,

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Baha Parab. Next in importance is the *Baha parab* which is held in the Bengali month Phalgun (February-March). This festival takes place when the sal trees (shorea robusta) begin to flower. *Baha* is a Santali word which means flower. The purpose of holding this festival is that the new year is well commenced. Drinking, dancing and singing go on in this festival also. The festival takes place in the *Jahersthan* and the *Naike* and *Kudum Naike* worship in the *Jahersthan*. On the first day of the festival the young people of the village build two sheds in *Jahersthan*, one for *Jaher-era, Turuko Moreko* and *Marang Buru* and the other for *Gosain era*. The *sthans* are cleaned by plastering with cowdung. Then they go to bathe and oil several articles (winnowing fan, basket, bow and arrows, battle-axe, broom, a wristlet, a necklace and bell and horn of a buffalo which they call *sakua*) which are to be used next day, when three persons become possessed by the three first bongas mentioned above. The whole night is spent in drumming at the house of the *Naike*, where all assemble with *bongas* (the persons who will be possessed with bongas are called *bongas*). Jaher-era is a female diety and a man who is possessed with this *bonga* takes the ornaments, the basket and the broom; *Moreka* takes the bow and arrow and *Marang Buru* carries the battle-axe. With these articles they start running for the *Jahersthan* followed by the boys who carry drums cymbals, bugle and bull-roarer. On arriving at the *Jahersthan, Jaher-era* sweeps the place; the *Naike* asks the *bongas* (i.e., those who are possessed with the deities) for the things they have brought and places them on a mat. He then asks them questions

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796 [787] about the happenings of the coming year. The *Naike* then washes the *bongas* and throws the surplus water over them, whereupon the *bongas* jump up howling. Then they return home.

796 798 Next day they again go to the *Jahersthan*. When they see a fine *sal* tree in bloom, *Moreka* shoots an arrow into it, while *Marang Buru* climbs it and cuts down the flowering branches, *Jahar-era* receiving the flowers in a basket. On the road *Marang Buru* gathers mowah blossoms. In the *Jahersthan* the *bongas* are 796 again placed on a mat under the shed, and the *Naike*, 798 sitting in front of them, sacrifices the fowls, and places a 793 bunch of flowers with a mowah flower before each *bonga*. [782] The *bongas* suck the blood of the fowls, whereupon the *Naike* washes their feet, *Jahar-era* doing the same to the *Naike*. The *Naike*, together with his wife who is now brought to the *Jahersthan* for the purpose, eats one of the fowls cooked with rice; some of the villagers eat the rest in the *Jahersthan*. After this all leave, except the *Naike* who remains alone in the *Jahersthan*. The villagers then proceed to sacrifice [782] fowls and pigs in their own houses, and to eat and drink. In the afternoon they go to the *Jahersthan* to bring the *Naike* back and the rest of the day is spent in general merry making. The women also enjoy to their heart's content.

241 796 The Santals perform several festivals before sowing seeds and also after reaping when they offer the first fruits to the village deities.

[778] **Erok-Puja**: This festival they perform before sowing seeds in the newly ploughed field. They celebrate it in

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the *Jahersthan* in the month of Asadh (June-July). *Naike* and his assistant *Kudum Naike* perform the function. Five fowls are sacrificed in the *Jahersthan*. After the function they cook these fowls and eat them, the heads of the fowls are taken by the *Naike* and *Kudum Naike*.

Hariar Sim: The Santals hold this festival at the time of the sprouting of rice, which takes place in the month of Sraban (July-August). Fowls are sacrificed to all the tribal and village deities and prayers are offered for a bountiful harvest.

Janthar Puja (Nawai) This festival is held in the month of Agrahayan (November-December) in the *Jahersthan* when the first gathering of the winter rice crop is offered Similarly the first gathering of the millets is offered in the sacred grove in the month of Bhadra (August-September) which the Santals call Irigrudli-nawai. The *Naike* reaps a little of the crop and offers to the village deities in the *Jahersthan*, and ties a twig round the five trees of the *Jahersthan* The *Naike* at the time of uttering prayer pours some milk on the offerings. Similar offerings are made by each householder of the village to the spirits of their ancestors.

Mak' More: This festival is observed by the Santals generally at intervals of five years or so in the *Jahersthan* as a result of vows made at times of distress or epidemics. Fowls are sacrificed and a white goat is sacrificed in the name of the village community to *Mokroko*, one of the five deities of Santals which they worship in the *Jahersthan*. The flesh of the sacrified

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796 782 animals is eaten by the men. The only woman who gets a share is the wife of the priest. Drinking, dancing and singing are followed by young men and women of the village.

796 614 [184] **Jom Sim:** The *Jom Sim* is performed with many quaint ceremonies which differ somewhat for the different clans. That is why it is called clan festival. Mr. Culshaw recorded some stories from which it can be ascertained how it is connected with clan. "The 614 796 539 Karwak Hasdak tell the story of how long ago their ancestors were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and all the Hasdak were present. They had performed the sacrifices and everyone had been served with rice and meat, but some of the younger folk present felt that they had not been given enough to eat, so they killed a buffalo, or kada, became known as Karwar Hasdak". The Soren Santal relate "that in the very early days the ancestors of the Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the company began to prepare the food and cook it. In imitation of Brahmin cooks [179] they put on sacred threads and served all the people. From that time they became known as poita Soren".[1]

796 614 174 It is probably the oldest sacrifice the Santal have because it has more aboriginal features in it than any other sacrifice of theirs.

724 793 [221] [824] [211] **Dihri Hunting:** The *Dihri* hunting, which is the most important hunting of the Santals which takes place once a year in the month of Falgun (February and March). *Dihri*, their hunting priest carries a big branch of a *Sal* tree with leaves and goes to the market, where people

[1] W. J. Culshaw—Tribal heritage. 1949. pp. 74 and 75.

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seeing him understand the purpose of his coming. As each leaf represents a day so they count them all and go out for hunting after just the number of days as indicated by the leaves of the branch. In this hunting expedition people of distant villages take part. The *Dihri* is responsible for the hunt, i.e. (all goes well and no mishap occurs). By divination he finds out as to who are threatened by any danger during the hunt, and advises them to turn back but they generally make him sacrifice fowls for them to *Sin Bonga* to avert the impending calamity. He performs some ceremony and offers sacrifices to *bongas* of the forest where the hunt is to be held, to ensure success and safety in the following way:

The *Dihri* enters the forest and being naked, pricks his whole body except the joints, with the thorn of a bush. He then draws a small circle on the ground with powdered rice and puts some adwa rice mixed with the blood which comes out from his body and makes a vermilion mark inside the circle. The *Dihri* then gives a little rice to all the forest *bongas*. Others who are following him, then enter the forest with bows and arrows.

Mag-Sim: The Santals perform this festival in the month of Magh (January-February) when the jungle grass is mown; fowls are sacrificed to all the *bongas* by the village priest and his assistant. This festival marks the end of the Santal year. All the village officials go through the form of resigning their offices and the cultivators give up their lands. After a week the headman of the village says before all the villagers that he has changed his mind and would like to continue in the

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They have no memory of ever having possessed the institution, but a snatch of song once heard suggests that they did at some period abandon it. In a *Sohrae* song occur the words

> The young girls are sleeping in the girls' house,
> The young men are sleeping in the young men's cowshed.[1]

If, as seems likely, they once had such an institution, it is probable that the *jogmañjhi* and his wife were in charge. At some festivals the young men sleep at the house of the *jog mañjhi*, and at the time of the *Sohrae* they go to him at the beginning of the festival and ask him in formal language to turn a blind eye to any of the faults they commit during that time. He is also called in to investigate allegations of immoral behaviour. The appointment is for life and it is hereditary, like that of the headman. In every village there are also two priests, who are responsible for maintaining right relations with the unseen world, but it will be more convenient to deal with their functions at a later stage.[2]

The humblest of the village officials is the *godet'*, the bailiff and messenger of the headman. When a child is born or a villager dies, it is the *godet'* who carries the news to all the houses. If it becomes necessary to summon the men of the village to a council to announce the near approach of a marriage party, or to collect dues from the houses for a feast in connection with a festival, it is the *godet's* duty to see that it is done. He is the errand boy, and consequently something of a butt for the wit of the village, as the following song (sung during the *Sohrae* festival) bears witness:

> Here comes the headman walking slowly,
> And here comes his deputy with wooden sandals,
> And also the *godet'* calling out to everyone.
>
> Put out a woven bed for the headman to sit on,
> Put out a wooden stool for his deputy,
> And put out for the *godet'* a broken bed.
>
> Pour out for the headman the first brew of beer,
> Pour out for his deputy the second brew,
> Pour out for the *godet'* the leavings.
>
> Give to the headman cakes of sifted flour,
> Give to his deputy some coarser cakes,
> And give to the *godet'* the lumpy bits.[3]

[1] See Appendix B, No. 1.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 2.
[3] See Chapter 7

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month. The date of the third is arranged while the first hunt is in progress, and it is announced by means of a *girę*. This is a method of reckoning dates or announcing future events. It may be used in connection with a hunt, but it is also used to announce a forthcoming marriage or a burial feast. It consists of a length of string in which a number of knots are tied, each knot representing one day. A number of *girę* are distributed to the surrounding villages during the weekly market, and they are kept by the headmen, who untie one of the knots each evening until one knot remains, when they know that the hunt takes place on the morrow.

Although the ritual meaning of the hunt has been obscured in the minds of the Santals, it is implicit in much that accompanies it. A hunt is the activity of the whole adult male population of the area. Women are not permitted to take part, but certain taboos must be observed by them while the men are away from home, to avert the lurking dangers of the forest. The prohibitions are similar to those enjoined on mourners and widows. No woman may wear flowers in her hair nor use the vermilion paint in the parting of her hair which is a sign of her married status. She should also leave off wearing the iron bangle which is another symbol of her marriage, and she must not bathe. At the present day, although the first two prohibitions are observed, there is some slackness about the others. But the main responsibility for placating the possibly malevolent influences residing in the forest rests with the *dihri*, or hunt priest. This is a special office, and the name is evidently the same as the Khond *dehuri* and the Ho *dihiri*, or priest. Among the Santals the *dihri* is a priest only at the time of the hunt, and he is appointed for the *pargana*. On the morning of the day when the hunt opens he performs the sacrifice of a brown hen on the edge of the forest which will be entered, and the tribal spirits are invoked to protect the men from wild beasts. He is encouraged by the spectators, who remind him that if any of them comes to harm they will hold him responsible. At times a certain amount of mimic hunting takes place in connection with the sacrifice, during which the *dihri* plays the part of the hunted animal.

The hunt lasts through the greater part of the day. The forest is surrounded by parties from different villages and the game gradually driven towards the centre. Within living memory the stock of game in most parts of the area has declined, and some of the hunts are now poorly attended for

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CHAPTER 7

THE WORLD INVISIBLE—(1)

THE Santal village is organized to secure the greatest possible degree of co-operation not only in temporal affairs but also in dealing with the spirit world. The relationship between Santal society and some part of the universe inhabited by spirits is very close, and it is maintained by the society acting through its representatives. One of the most important officials in the village is the *nacke*, or village priest, whose business it is to maintain right relationships with the tribal spirits. A priest who was once asked whether he really believed in his work replied without any hesitation: "If I did not do my work the whole village would become sick!" His answer provides in effect a true summary of the Santal conception of the priest's work. He is a man apart, and he is conscious of his separation from his fellows. Alone of all the village officials he is not appointed by his fellow villagers, but by the *bongas*, the spirits that are worshipped. The investing of a new priest with the necessary authority occurs during the ceremonies following the death of his predecessor. The spirits take possession of the designated individual and so establish the identity of the new priest beyond any possibility of doubt. The marks of possession, the result of the process known to the Santals as *rum*, are quite familiar. *Rum* is the regular method by which the spirits reveal their wishes, convey comfort or warning, and assure the living of their fellowship with the spirits of the tribe and with their ancestors. The behaviour of a person who is possessed is similar to that of one who has suffered a sudden onslaught of insanity, and he speaks in the character of the spirit who has for the time being taken possession of his personality.

In spite of the supernatural origin of the priestly office, one finds that the spirits in making an appointment have been actuated largely by common-sense considerations. They usually ensure that the eldest son of the deceased priest assumes his father's functions, or, failing him, perhaps they will appoint a brother. One may discern two reasons why the succession is secured in this manner. In the first place, a son will have had special opportunities of watching his father at work, and having been brought up in the right atmosphere he is already familiar with the rules and customs that govern the office. Secondly, when the original distribution of lands was made in the new village, the first *nacke*, in common with the other officials, received

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a portion of land in recognition of his appointment, and land cannot easily pass out of the possession of a particular clan. The office therefore tends to remain in the family, for fresh lands are not obtainable after one or two generations have passed away.

The villagers recognize the priest's office, as they do those of the other dignitaries, by payment in return for services rendered. When one of the villagers is fined by the council, the priest receives his own share of the total sum. When game is killed in the hunt, the priest's share consists of a strip of flesh cut from the animal's backbone; it is formed into the shape of a cooking-place before it is handed over to him. He receives the heads of all the animals that are sacrificed by him on behalf of his fellow villagers. His duty is to make the offerings to the tribal spirits on behalf of the whole village at the time of the festivals. In order to prepare himself he has to separate himself from his fellows. Santals ordinarily sleep on string beds, but on the night before a sacrifice the priest sleeps on the floor, and he must abstain from sexual intercourse. On the morrow he has to fast until his work is done.

In addition to the priest, there is in every village a co-priest with special functions. This official is known as the *kudam nacke*. The word *kudam* refers to the area behind the dwelling-house. During village festivals, while the priest is making the main offerings, the *kudam nacke* sacrifices to the *pargana boingâ*, the spirit who is regarded as the guardian or perhaps as the personification of the wider territorial unit into which groups of Santal villages are formed. It may be that this particular spirit needs the services of the co-priest because the *pargana boinga* was resident in the area before the villagers settled within its borders, while they brought the other spirits with them. The other function fulfilled by the *kudam nacke* reveals ideas which comprise perhaps a separate strata in the complex structure of Santal religion. During the festivals he offers drops of blood, which he produces by pricking his own arm with a thorn, to the boundary spirits, or the spirits of the outskirts of the forests. The name of this blood offering is *bul mayam*, *mayam* being the ordinary word for blood. The meaning of the term *bul* in this context is obscure, and Santals are unable to offer any explanation. *Bul* is a word connoting drunkenness; it can also be used as an adjective to describe an earthen pot that has become saturated with water, and it may refer to the saturation of the rice offering with the blood. In some incantations the phrase is coupled with one that refers to menstrual blood. The same

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793 practice of making an offering of his own blood is followed by
782 the magician[1] when he is attempting to cure sickness. While the function of the priest is to deal with the tribal spirits, it would seem that his co-priest has to propitiate relatively unknown and fearful spirits; one might almost describe him as a kind of "minister for foreign affairs" in relation to the spirit world.

778 Santal worship centres round its sacred places, the most
824 prominent of which is the *jaher*, the sacred grove usually to the west of the village. It consists of a number of tall, slim *sarjom* trees with perhaps one or two trees of other varieties, the whole having been left standing since the village was first founded. The surrounding forests have been cut down to form land for cultivation and for the homesteads, so the grove stands out [184] from the landscape. Apart from festival occasions there is usually little to show the sacredness of the place, but the practice varies greatly from village to village. Two of the tallest 778 trees standing side by side are thought to be the abodes of 776 *Marak Buru*, the national spirit of the Santals, and of his 824 female consort *Jaher Budhi*, the Old Lady of the Sacred Grove. At the side of the former tree one sometimes discerns the blackened stones of the fireplace at which the village priest cooks – apart from the rest of the village—his share of the offerings. Other relics of festivals may be found, such as an ear of paddy still attached to its stalk, tied round one of the trees and left there since the time of the offering of first-fruits. Sometimes there are semi-permanent posts in the ground near the more sacred trees, two in front of the trees and two at the back, with cross-pieces joining them to form the framework on which a temporary thatch is placed during the festivals over the place where the sacrifices are performed. One of the trees is the abode of the "Five and Six", and near it a post standing in the ground represents the place of one *Laga Thakur*, who acts as their [264] watchman. Removed to a little distance is the place where the food of the villagers is cooked: the meals eaten here are communal. There are other trees at which the *kudam naeke* makes his blood offering to the boundary spirits, and these are indicated during the festivals by means of a piece of string. In some villages one finds indications of places at the edge of the grove at which one or other of the sub-clans performs its sacrifices. In some groves the space at the foot of the principal trees is tended carefully as befits a shrine. The ground is cleared and plastered regularly with cowdung and water, a cactus hedge is planted to

[1] The *ojha*. See Chapter 8, pp. 94 ff.

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jaher rather than as the *Mañjhi than*. Until recently the shrine had been in another place beyond the present limits of the dwellings, and the villagers had found such a site very inconvenient. They were encouraged to change the site by the fact that in the street there grew an *arjun* tree, one of the sacred trees of Hinduism, and they felt they should do something to signalize its presence in the village. On a cleared space at the base of the tree there were two miniature wooden seats which were used by the spirits when they came, and there were also a clay horse and an elephant which had been in position there since the establishment of the shrine. The duty of tending these shrines, of sweeping the floor and plastering it with cowdung, falls upon an unmarried girl from the headman's house. The headman officiates as the priest at this shrine, presenting the offerings to his ancestors as the representative not only of the family but also of the living members of the village community. Offerings are made during the *Mokor*, the festival that closes the month of *Pus* in mid-January, and also during the Spring and Harvest festival seasons. Animals are sacrificed, but there is a significant difference in the methods of killing the animals offered in the sacred grove to the tribal spirits and those offered to the spirits of the ancestors. In the case of the former the animal is beheaded, but in the latter the animal is struck by a heavy implement on the back of the head so that the blood is not poured out. It does not seem possible to obtain any explanation of this from a Santal, apart from the all-embracing statement that "it is the custom". There is here another indication of the complexity of Santal religion; it would be difficult to fit all the facts into a scheme that seeks to find the origin of sacrifice in a single or simple cause.

The spirit world is not only the concern of the whole community or of each village but also of each family, a fact that finds embodiment in the cult surrounding the third sacred place of the Santals. This is a sacred enclosure inside each dwelling-house known as the *bhitar*, an Indo-Aryan word that means "within". This is formed by constructing a wall across the breadth of the main dwelling-house and so dividing the interior into two rooms with a mud partition between. The *bhitar* is the smaller of the two. The wall may be carried as high as the average height of a man, but often it is only about four feet high. The opening through which members of the family may pass from one room to the other is left vacant without a door. There are no sacred emblems kept in the *bhitar*,

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so they say, nine generations ago. One of the first settlers was one Lokhon Mañjhi. Just before he died he had been paying a visit to the *boiga than*, probably the sacred grove of that day. It occupied a site that is now taken by the landlord's rent-collecting office and has quite disappeared. He returned home, sat down on his string bed to have a smoke, then suddenly fell over and died. Almost immediately, and before the news of Lokhon's death had passed through the village, a young man in the courtyard of a house belonging to Lokhon's paternal aunt became possessed. He announced to the assembled company that he was Lokhon and that they must make a sacred place for him. They chose an old banyan tree to the north of the village. This tree has long since disappeared, but its place has been taken by an *atnak'* tree, which serves equally well. The fact that the village has become largely non-Santal means that the sanctity of this particular shrine is recognized by people belonging to many different castes, and its reputation has grown with the years. All the offerings there are made by the Santal priest in the village, a man who is descended from Lokhon. He is also the local Santal headman and combines the two offices in one person; such an arrangement is not unique and seems to have been adopted often in places where the Santals are living surrounded by other communities. He and his predecessors have adapted themselves to the new situation, and so this shrine, now utilized by many non-Santals, is still served by a Santal priest. Every market day people from the surrounding villages come to offer sacrifices, to ask a boon, or to leave their thank-offerings of money for blessings that have been granted. Some of the more unscrupulous of the local inhabitants defy the spirits by hanging around and picking up the coins left by the devout.

At the base of the tree is the shrine, formed by a raised earthen mound on which there are many burnt clay effigies of horses and elephants. In front of the mound a narrow path has been cleared for about eight feet, so that the tree is approached from the west, the direction in which all the effigies are facing. This path has been cleared through a jumbled heap of innumerable small clay animal effigies that have been left at the shrine by devotees in the past in the performance of their vows. Here there were many opportunities for watching the priest at work, and the chief impression that stands out is the dignity and reverence with which he performed his tasks. On a particular Thursday in 1941 he first of all cleared a small space at

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the base of the earthen mound and smeared it with his mixture of cowdung and water. He then took some vermilion paint from a leaf and mixed it with mustard oil in a small brass cup that he had brought for the purpose. This mixture he proceeded to smear on the foreheads of the larger animal effigies, and in doing so he used only the middle finger of his right hand. He then sprinkled some water over the effigies, and followed this by sprinkling some spice, of a variety known as *mithu*.[1] Up to this point all his actions had been performed in complete silence, and he was being watched intently by a small group of people who were waiting to make their offerings. He used the utmost deliberation and completed each part of the proceeding with great reverence. He next took up in his right hand a twig of the *sinjo*[2] tree and passed it in an anti-clockwise direction over the space that had been smeared with cowdung and laid it at the foot of the mound. Then he did an obeisance, bringing his right hand up to his forehead with the fingers lightly clenched, while the fingers of his left hand rested against his right forearm, the customary Santal salutation by an adult to his respected seniors. The process was repeated three times with three separate twigs, and as each twig was moved around he muttered his prayer. When it was over he told me that one had been for *Cando*, one for *Marak Buru*, and one for Lokhon Majhi.

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All was then ready for the offerings, of which on that particular day there were three. The first was a pigeon that had been brought by the mother of a sick child. He accepted it from the mother, taking hold of it by his right hand and taking care - he was squatting on the ground--not to turn his back on the shrine. He smeared the head of the pigeon with vermilion and oil, sprinkled it with some of the *mithu*, and then held it to feed on a little parched rice that he had placed on a leaf on the smeared space. He then handed the pigeon back to the woman who had brought it. The same process was repeated with a black hen and a small black goat that belonged to others who had been waiting. As each of them took back the dedicated animals they paid a small money fee to the priest, this varying from one to four pice. He then placed his sacrificial axe on the ground to his left with the sharp edge uppermost. This axe, known as the *tangi*, has a curved blade. He took hold of the pigeon once more and severed its head by passing it swiftly

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[1] *Trigonella Foenum-graecum*, Willd.
[2] The Bengali *Bel*, Aegle Marmelos, *Correa*.

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across the axe edge, then held it so that the blood should pour on to the parched rice, after which he flung away the body of the pigeon with his left hand and placed the severed head with the parched rice. The hen was sacrificed in exactly the same way. He then rose to his feet for the sacrifice of the goat. This was of necessity a more elaborate proceeding. A little way off from the shrine, to the south-west, there stood a "killing-post" with a cleft at its upper end. The goat's neck was forced into this cleft, and it was secured with rope. Its owner held the goat firmly, clasping its front legs and securing them by drawing them up and backward over the goat's back, and the priest severed the head with one quick stroke of the axe. Immediately and with great speed he took hold of both the head and the body, so that the blood might drop on to the parched rice. This completed the offerings for the day, and he gathered up the heads of the animals and his other possessions and took them away in a small basket.

This Sarenga shrine affords a good example of the way in which Hinduism can take over the customs and use the beliefs of those who are not, strictly speaking, within the fold, but in spite of the eclecticism here apparent there is a point beyond which the Santals of the village will not go in accommodating themselves to Hindu society. The *Mokor* festival at the end of *Pus* is celebrated by all the lower Hindu castes of the area as well as by the Santals, and at Sarenga it is accompanied by a gathering near this shrine, when many different people, including the Santals, take part in the stick dancing. On the other hand, in 1930 a proposal made by the local Hindus of influence roused great indignation and had to be abandoned. A Santal couple from the village who had previously been baptized were persuaded, as a result of a mission by an agent of the Arya Samaj, to renounce the Christian faith. It was proposed that they should undergo the *suddhi*, or purification ceremony, at the hands of the Arya missionary at Lokhon Mañjhi's shrine. The Santals immediately announced that they would not recognize the validity of any such ceremony and that if it took place at their shrine they would cut down the tree and desecrate the shrine with their own hands. Many beliefs have grown up around the place. Binu of Tantidanga used to say that there were certainly times when the animals moved; he himself had twice seen them do so at the time of the *Pus* festival. He used to relate the local legend of how when Europeans had first tried to live at Sarenga they found

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CHAPTER 9

FESTIVALS

The two great village festivals take place in the spring and after the harvest. The name of the former, *Baha*, means "Flower festival". It is held after the full moon in the month of *Phalgun* (February-March). The hot season is about to begin, sap is rising in the trees, and the *sarjom* is resplendent with blossom and tender green leaves. Until the festival has taken place the women do not gather the *mahkom* blossoms which provide them with both food and drink. It is held on different days in different villages so that the celebrations can be accompanied by a round of visits to relatives. The opening day of all festivals is a day of purification, known as "bathing day". On this day at the time of the Spring festival two temporary sheds are put up in the sacred grove and the young men carry out a hunt in the woods near the village. The priest completes his preparations and bathes certain articles in the waters of the village tank. At sunset three hens are taken to his house by the villagers, who remain there to dance. Three of the young men become spirit-possessed. One impersonates the "Five", another the Old Lady of the Sacred Grove, and the third takes the part of *Maran Buru*; they seize the implements which the priest has purified earlier in the day and make play with them. The priest receives them with respect; he washes their legs and, addressing the spirits, he asks for good fortune during the coming year. When this is over the young men are recalled to their senses by a series of sharp taps on their backs. Dancing is continued throughout the night in the village street just outside the priest's house.

In the early afternoon of the following day the priest is accompanied by the villagers in a singing procession to the sacred grove. On arrival there the same young men are again possessed and run away across the fields, being chased and brought back by the rest of the young men. The priest now assumes an attitude of great humility towards them. He receives them with a cloth tied round his neck in token of the submission of the village to the spirits. The hens are sacrificed and cooked in a hash with rice. The priest and his wife partake of one and the men of the village consume the rest of the food, after which everyone returns home except the priest. He has to remain in the grove until the young men return to escort him. He is then taken to every house in turn and received with great honour. His feet are

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His feet are washed in each house and he receives presents of grain and beer. The subsequent merrymaking dies down during the night. The celebration is completed on the following day, when the co-priest offers drops of his own blood to the boundary spirits.

The following account of the Spring festival held in Barikul in 1939 was recorded by Babulal at the time, and it conveys, as no outside account could, the atmosphere of the festival. He begins:

"*March* 17. Today is the bathing day for the Flower festival. Early in the morning the bailiff called everyone to make the booths ready in the sacred grove. The women were busy boiling their clothes. One young man from every house took part in the thatching of the booths; some brought *sarjom* branches from the jungle, and others made small wooden seats for the spirits. The priest washed all the things for the spirits' house -the bangles, the necklace, a bow and arrow, an axe, also basket, broom, bells and horns—and he brought back to his house an earthen pot of water for luck. The place of sacrifice was smeared with cowdung, and oil and vermilion were placed there in readiness. When the young men had finished the thatching they bathed, and then said to the bailiff: 'We go now to Sonadungri for the flower hunt; see that the drums beat and the horns sound at the foot of the banyan tree, for when we hear them we shall start. Do not delay, for we want to begin.' The bailiff completed his bath quickly, and taking four youths with the drums and the horns to the banyan tree by the stone fence he did as he had been requested. And so the youths went out hunting. They caught fourteen hares, thirteen jungle fowl, four partridges and ten squirrels. These they brought home hanging from a pole which was slung from the shoulders of two men. When they arrived back at the side of the large tank, the spoils were divided, and some we gave to the men of neighbouring villages who had joined in the hunt. The flesh was roasted and divided; some was given to the killers, some to the dogs, some to the villagers, and a special portion to the widows.

In the evening the bailiff called everyone to gather for the 'spirit possession'. We took three new winnowing fans and all collected at the priest's house. Three men were possessed, and each of them took hold of a winnowing fan. They were seated facing the east, and the priest put sun-dried rice on to the winnowing fan of *Marak Buru*. Immediately to his left sat *Manjhi*

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haṛam,[1] and on the left of *Mạñjhi haṛam* there sat the Old Lady of the Grove, and to them also rice was given. The spirits spoke and shook the rice in the winnowing fans. Then they began to shake their heads from side to side, and called out, '*His-sạhāk!*' At this everyone called out, 'Greetings, Lords!' for the spirits had come. The Old Lady of the Grove placed the necklace round her neck, put on the bangles, seized the broom and put the washed basket on her head, and then ran away to the grove. *Maraṅ Buru* and *Mạñjhi haṛam* went after her with the bow and arrows and the axe, and in the darkness the Old Lady lost her necklace and the bangles. When they all ran back to the priest's house and the loss was discovered we told her that she must find them again. So she went once more to the grove and brought them back. After this we said to all of them: 'The horses are weary; let the spirit riders descend!' The priest then applied vermilion on their cheeks, their chests and their backs, and they came to their senses. So it ended. Next the villagers began to dance, and the first song was this:

> High up in the *pipal*[2] tree
> Sings the crimson-breasted barbet;
> It wanders through the country,
> It flies over the land.[3]

Then they began the late evening dance and many other dances, such as the road dance, and they sang:

> Down in the valley blooms the *haṭ*[4] tree, sister;
> Come, let us make flower chains, sister;
> Come, let us wear the flowers, dangling.[5]

The priest spent the night sleeping on a bed of leaves, while everyone else, old and young, men and women, danced the night through. Next morning the priest told the bailiff quickly to collect the hens; he himself bathed and went to the grove, taking with him *sarjom* and *matkom* flowers, sun-dried rice, flour, oil and vermilion, all in a new winnowing fan. He also carried a brown hen and on his open upturned palm a small

[1] *Mạñjhi haṛam* is the title that denotes the founder of the village. Possibly in Barikul he is honoured instead of the "Five", though it might be Babulal's mistake.
[2] Santali *hesak' dare*: *Ficus religiosa*, L.
[3] See Appendix B, No. 16.
[4] A small tree, *Holarrhena antidysenterica*, Wall.
[5] See Appendix B, No. 17.

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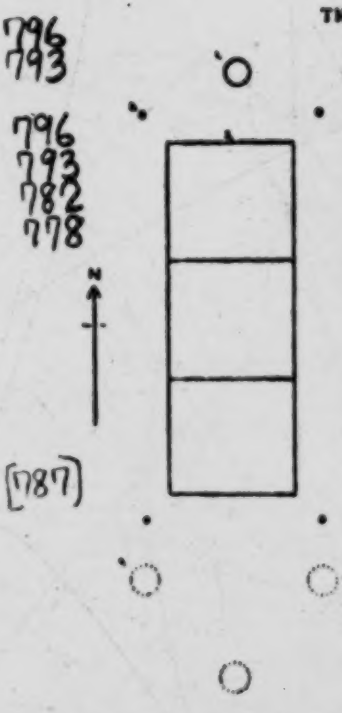

brass water-pot, while his wife carried the earthen pot of water brought for good fortune. Youths and maidens conducted him to the grove, dancing as they went, and there he began to make the sacrifice. The youths and the maidens danced in the grove, the young men singing only the Flower dance songs, and while the dancing went on the priest proceeded with his work. With the flour he made the circles and the squares. A hen was offered in each of the circles; the brown hen was slain in the Moslem[1] fashion, while the other two had their necks cut. Again each of the spirits took possession of a man, and they sucked the blood of the slain birds. One circle was for *Marañ Buru*, one for the Old Lady of the Grove, and one for *Mąñjhi haṛam*. In the squares the priest sacrificed to the village spirits, and as we had brought many hens it was not possible to offer them all, so some were killed by knocking their heads on the ground. When it was all over, the priest cooked the heads of the first three hens with flour, making cakes of them, and then ate them and drank beer. This is called 'lifting the head'. Then the folk in the village who offer to the 'Five' took flowers from the trees of the grove, returned to their own houses and made mounds of the flowers. Near these mounds they offered either hens or goats. (Some of those who worship the 'Five' invite all their relatives at this time and make the sacrifice in the grove.) Meanwhile the priest drank beer and cooked a hash of rice with the brown hen.

Late in the afternoon the young men went to receive the priest back into the village. They went dancing to the grove and danced round the priest. Again the spirits took possession of the three young men, who danced with the others. The Old Lady again wore the bangles and the necklace and carried the

[1] This is Bābulāl's word. The offering to *Mąñjhi haṛam* is strangled and not beheaded.

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basket on her head; likewise *Marań Buru* took the bow and arrows and *Mańjhi haram* held the axe. Just before sunset the men came to their senses, the priest gathered up all the things, and his wife carried the lucky water-pot. As before, the youths and maidens placed the priest in their midst and again the spirits came and danced with the others. Then in every house, from one end of the village street to the other, they washed the feet of the priest. He put *sarjom* flowers into the hair of the girls who washed his feet, and all the people sprinkled water on to each other. On that day we are free to sprinkle water on anyone else.[1] When we reached the priest's house he poured out two pots of beer and we all drank. Again the dancing began and went on till a late hour.

March 18. Yesterday was the full Flower festival day; today is the 'stale' day of the feast. Yesterday everyone was drunk, and again today they began to drink early. There were many visitors in the village, for we had invited daughters, sisters and sons-in-law to be with us. We had to feed them well, and we were busy with all the preparations. One prepared rice, another flour, while the men killed cocks or goats or pigs, for yesterday they had no time to feast well. Even so, in some of the houses a few people became drunk before they had time to eat. Those unfortunates had no meat either yesterday or today. Most of the time went in feasting, though there was some dancing in the village street, and the dancers sang:

> Let us gather, O elder sister, the *matkom*;
> Let us wear the *sarjom* flowers, elder sister, in our hair;
> Let us drink, O elder sister, the juice of the *matkom*.[2]

Most of the singing was done by a small band of old men and women who went into each of the houses and were given beer and *matkom* flowers by the people of the house. In our part of the village there was a fierce quarrel. Some of the men who went to stop the trouble were themselves beaten and returned very angry to their homes. Before midnight everyone was fast asleep, for all had been drinking heavily. I thought to myself, if anyone came here tonight with evil intent he could steal anything he wanted with the greatest ease; and, in fact, that is what happened. During the night someone stole from the headman's house five goats, male and female."

[1] Water "squirts" are made from bamboo and are used freely.
[2] See Appendix II, No. 18.

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We also say that if we urinate in a standing position the Flower spirits will be pleased. For this reason, if anyone sees us urinating in a standing position and scolds us for it we reply: 'We are making offerings to the Flower spirits!' The Flower festival is for flowers and fruits what the offering of new rice is for rice. Until the priest has placed flowers in the hair of the women and eaten some of the *matkom*, no one will wear flowers or eat the *matkom*. From the new year until after the festival the priest has to live very carefully. He eats nothing in other people's houses, because others may have been on a visit to villages where the festival has already taken place and then he might eat something that is forbidden. One of the songs that is sung when the priest is being escorted to the grove and again back to his house refers to the fact that the Dol Jatra festival of the Hindus has already taken place.[1]

'The Dol is over now, maidens, the *Pata*[2] comes next;
You must buy shields, maidens, for yourselves.

In the maidens' pubic region is the black bee's honeycomb;
You must buy shields, maidens, for yourselves.' "[3]

The second great festival is celebrated when all the harvest has been gathered in and there is plenty of food. The Santals say that for one month after the Harvest festival, known as the *Sohrae*, they eat rice without measuring it. Although it may be held at any time during the period between the dark night in October-November and the middle of January, in most of the villages of the area it is now celebrated at the earliest possible date, when Hindus are celebrating the Kali Puja. One reason is to enable those who are migrating for work to share in it before they depart, and some of the villagers distinguish between this fixed festival and a true *Sohrae* fixed in the traditional manner. In a bad year a Santal remarked: "This year we shall have no *Sohrae*. There has been no harvest, so what would we eat and how could we invite our friends?" The words were spoken while the village in question was actually celebrating the festival at Kali Puja time. Further, the celebration of Kali Puja amongst the surrounding cultivator castes, and especially the Bauri, has many features in common with the Santal cult, particularly with reference to cattle worship, and this factor has undoubtedly led the Santals to approximate the time of their celebrations to that of their neighbours.

[1] See Chapter 7, p. 99.
[2] See Appendix II, No. 29.
[3] The hook-swinging festival.

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On the evening before the appointed day the village bailiff delivers the sacrificial hens, two white hens and one brown, to the priest's house. The priest observes his customary abstinence during that night, sleeping on the bare floor. Next morning the bailiff makes a collection of one hen from each house in the village, together with rice, salt and the various spices that are needed to cook a curry. It is the duty of the priest's wife to grind the flour that will be needed for "cakes"; his sister may perform this work only if she is unmarried. In the morning the priest constructs the sacred squares and circles on a piece of ground previously plastered with cowdung. The sacrifices are performed at noon, and these are in some cases offered in the sacred grove, but in some villages they are offered by the side of a stream or on the bank of one of the artificial lakes that abound. The sacred place is made from north to south, as in the case of the Flower festival, and the procedure is the same. First of all rice is sprinkled in the enclosures and some vermilion is placed on the rice. The birds are fed on the rice, water is sprinkled over them, and vermilion is smeared on their heads, their wings and their legs. When the sacrifice is complete, the priest eats the flesh of the heads, while the men of the village feast on a hash made from the rest of the flesh, and drink and sing.

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The distinctive feature of the sacrifice is that, before the hens are offered, an egg is placed standing upright on a small pile of rice in one of the squares, and all the herdboys of the village are summoned to bring the cattle. The priest places vermilion on their goad sticks, and they drive their cattle across the enclosure in which the egg is standing until one of the cattle tramples upon and breaks the egg. This is the signal for an outburst of cheering and excitement. The cow or bull is garlanded and anointed with vermilion on its horns and its head. Sometimes the boy is carried shoulder high to the village headman, before whom he makes a deep obeisance, afterwards saluting the other men of the village. When the villagers return to the houses in the late afternoon they are supplied with beer in the priest's house, after which they visit the headman's house for the same purpose, and so on from one house to another. It is at this time that the youths and young women visit the home of the *jogmājhi* and request him to turn a blind eye to their doings for the duration of the festival. The whole period is characterized by its freedom from traditional morality. The rules of avoidance are treated lightly, and many liberties are taken with members of the opposite sex.

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addition to the bride price, to receive a cloth for the bride's mother, one for her father's eldest sister and one each for her two grandmothers.

Some agreement must also be reached about the time of the marriage. This must not take place in the month in which either the bridegroom or bride was born. Formerly, I was told, there was no other prohibition regarding the month. Nowadays, however, the general practice of Hindus in Northern India is followed. Astrologers are not consulted, but marriages may not take place during the rains, and the most popular months are during the spring when the harvest has been gathered in and food is abundant. When the time is approaching, the actual date of the wedding is arranged by the go-between, and the *giṛa* is used to mark off the days remaining.

The whole community in both villages is vitally concerned in the due celebration of the wedding, and this fact is emphasized by the rôle of the village officials. The *jogmaṅjhi* of the bride's village acts as the master of ceremonies from the time when the marriage booths have to be erected until the end. The headman of the bridegroom's village does not take part in the preliminary visits by virtue of his office, but when the two families immediately involved are satisfied that they wish to proceed, both headmen are called in. They have to be present when the engagement is confirmed, and they are consulted about suitable dates. The final "contract" at the climax of the wedding celebrations is entered into by the people of the two villages, and it is made by the respective headmen. The village priest also plays a part, for the community involved in the marriage includes the spirits, who are guardians of the welfare of the tribe, and the ancestors, guardians of family and clan. Their blessing has to be sought. In an interesting passage Dr. Verrier Elwin says of the marriage ceremonial of the tribes of the Maikal hills: "There is little religion in it." On any definition of religion it would be difficult to maintain this thesis with regard to Santal marriage. The whole passage is quoted here, for the rest of what is said does apply in most of its detail to the Santal form of marriage: "We have already spoken of this ceremony as a work of art. There is little religion in it, but it has great social and symbolic value. It is hard to conceive of a better way of impressing on a man and woman their social and sexual union. The tying together of the clothes, the exchange of rings, the first meals together, the ceremonies by the river that symbolize mutual aid in domestic, sexual and food-obtaining activities, are of great significance.